DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 182 559 CE 024 283

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TITLE Occupational Sex-Role Stereotyping. Effects of a Ninth-Grade Experience-Based Career Education Program on Occupational Sex-Role Stereotyping.
PUB DATE 9 Feb 80
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the National Experience-Based Career Education Conference (St. Louis, MO, February 9, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Education; Career Exploration; Comparative Analysis; Experiential Learning; Females; Grade 9; Males; *Sex Role; *Sex Stereotypes
IDENTIFIERS *Experience Based Career Education

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the effects of a ninth-grade experience-based career education (EBCE) program upon occupational sex role stereotyping. Twenty-four volunteers were assigned to the EBCE group and twenty-four assigned to the control group. The career education group met four class periods per week and one full day per week for community resource site exploration. Students explored both traditional and nontraditional occupations for men and women in the community. Positive effect was defined in terms of lower absolute values assigned to occupational sex-role stereotyping scores on an occupational role identification inventory. Findings indicated a significant difference between the EBCE group and the control group on occupational sex role stereotyping measures of the occupational role identification inventory. The EBCE group was significantly less sex stereotyped in their view of the occupational world than was the control group. (LRA)

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OCCUPATIONAL SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING
Presented at the National Experience-Based Career Education Conference (EBCE)
February 9, 1980, St. Louis, Missouri
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ED182559

EFFECTS OF A NINTH-GRADE EXPERIENCE-BASED CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM ON OCCUPATIONAL SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING

by

Renae Bygel Humburg

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of a ninth-grade Experience-Based Career Education Program upon occupational sex-role stereotyping.

The rationale for an experience-based approach to career education at the junior high school level is based upon the increasing recognition of the importance of the career development process during these critical years. This need has been clearly stated in the literature related to the career development of adolescents (Campbell & Parsons, 1972; Ginzberg, 1971; Gribbons & Lohnes, 1968; Hales & Fenner, 1972; Kapes & Strickler, 1975; Keller, 1972; Perrone, 1973; Super & Overstreet, 1960; Tennyson, et al., 1975; Tuckman, 1974).

Some studies have indicated the positive effects of short-term career development activities on adolescents (Anderson & Herman, 1967;

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Flake et al., 1975; Omvig & Thomas, 1977). However, there has been a lack of significant differences reported between junior high school age experimental and control groups on short-term career education projects (Bookhamer, 1977; Swails & Herr, 1976).

Information related to the effects of career education projects on the sex-role stereotyping of junior high school age students is needed. Career development research studies conducted in the 1970's strongly suggests that the sex labeling of occupations is ingrained in the attitudes of children and adolescents toward the world of work (Anderson & Herman, 1976; Barnett, 1975; Burlin, 1974; Doherty & Culver, 1976; Iglitzen, 1973; Parks, 1974; Rapoza & Blocher, 1976; Schlossberg & Goodman, 1976; Shepard & Hess, 1975; Shinar, 1974; Tibbetts, 1975).

The implications of these studies emphasize that structural interventions upon the career development of adolescent males and females might have an effect on their sex-role stereotyping of the occupational world.

Method

McCormick Junior High School, Cheyenne, Wyoming, piloted an adaptation of the Research for Better Schools Experience-Based Career Education Model (Research for Better Schools, 1976b) during the winter trimester of the 1977-1978 school year. This study was designed to compare the performances between a group of ninth-grade students exposed to the Experience-Based Career Education Program (the experimental group) and a group of ninth-grade students not exposed to such treatment (the control group).

Forty-eight students were randomly selected from a pool of 111 applicants to the pilot career education program. Twenty-four volunteers were assigned to the Experience-Based Career Education group and 24 assigned to the control group. Positive effect was defined in terms of lower absolute values assigned to occupational sex-role stereotyping scores on an occupational role identification inventory developed for this study.

Format for the Experience-Based Career Education Program

The career education group met four class periods per week and one full day per week for community resource site exploration for a total of 12 weeks. Three exploration teams consisting of eight students each spent one full day at different community sites each week during the first 11 weeks of the trimester. Students rotated through group guidance sessions using career clarification activities (Research for Better Schools, 1976a) and community explorations on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week. Friday provided time for sharing the week's explorations with other teams and for clarifying how observations made in community explorations related to occupational sex-role stereotyping and to individual career planning.

Students explored both traditional and nontraditional occupations for men and women in the community. After a student had participated in 11 group career explorations, he/she chose and planned an individual career exploration in the community for one full day.

Measurement of Occupational Sex-Role Stereotyping

The procedure for measuring occupational sex-role stereotyping was adapted from studies by Parks (1974) and Shinar (1974).

The inventory was developed to determine how students classify 93 occupations in terms of sex appropriateness. The instructions and format for this section of the inventory are based on an instrument developed by Shinar (1974). The list of occupations used is based on Roe's Classification of Occupations (Roe, 1956). Roe's list represents a theoretical continuum of occupational areas and levels. Subjects are presented with the list of occupations and are asked to rate each occupation in terms of its being male, female, or both (neutral). Subjects are instructed to assume that the scale for each occupation is divided into seven equal intervals and to make a quick and independent judgment on each scale for each occupation. Testing time for the inventory is 15 minutes.

Findings

Occupational Sex-Role Stereotyping

A *t*-test was computed on the posttest means of the experimental and control groups. Analysis of test data revealed a significant difference. ($p < .05$) between the Experience-Based Career Education group and the control group on occupational sex-role stereotyping measures of the occupational role identification inventory. As predicted, the Experience-Based Career Education group mean score was significantly less sex stereotyped in their view of the occupational

world than that of the control group, $t(37) = 2.39$.

The scores reported in Table 1 are derived from the occupational role identification inventory. These mean scores are based on composites of the numbers assigned to each of 93 occupations. Each of 93 occupations are ranked on a 7-point bipolar scale from -3 (male) to +3 (female). An occupation that is ranked at zero is considered to be neutral, nonstereotyped, or possessing both masculine and feminine attributes. Possible composite scores range from -279 (male) to +279 (female). The composite score attaches a quantitative value to the occupational world in terms of sex-related attributes.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviations of Posttest Scores, Occupational Sex-Role Stereotyping

Statistic	Total Group	n[a]	Males	n	Females	n
Experimental						
Mean	-26.26	23	-38.36	11	-15.17	12
Standard Deviation	29.47		36.09		16.48	
Control						
Mean	-50.94	16	-60.30	10	-35.33	6
Standard Deviation	34.70		31.78		36.42	

Note. Possible occupational sex-role stereotyping composite scores for Part I, Occupational Role Indentification Inventory, range from -279 (male) to +279 (female) for 93 occupations. Zero is considered to be neutral or nonstereotyped.

[a] n = These numbers include only those students who completed both the pretest and posttest.

It should be noted that mean scores having a higher absolute value are considered to be more stereotyped than scores assigned lower absolute values. A survey of Table 1 yields the information that the absolute value for the experimental group males (38.36) was lower or less stereotyped than that of the control group males (60.30). The mean score of the experimental group females (15.17) was less stereotyped than that of the control group females (35.33).

Females tended to assign more female attributes to occupations than did the males in both groups. The experimental group female mean score was less stereotyped (15.17) than that of the experimental group males (38.36). The control group female mean score was less stereotyped (35.33) than the mean of the control group males (50.94).

Although this is a small sample, this finding is compatible with other researchers (Barnett, 1975; Iglitzen, 1973; Looft, 1971; Parks, 1974; Schlossberg & Goodman, 1972; Shepard & Hess, 1975; Shinar, 1974; Tibbetts, 1975) who reported that females tend to perceive most occupations as slightly more open to females than males do.

Discussion of Results

These findings suggest that classroom and community-based emphasis on awareness of occupational sex-role stereotyping may have an effect on lowering the occupational sex-role perceptions of adolescents. The fact that the Experience-Based Career Education Program Manager emphasized the topic of sex-role stereotyping throughout the 12-week trimester appeared to have some effect on occupational sex-role stereo-

typing. This finding is consistent with the findings of other researchers (Harris, 1974; Parks, 1974; Vincenzi, 1977).

Implications

While looking at the results of this study, one must realize that the sample of students used here were volunteers whose views of the sexual classification of occupations may differ from that of other ninth graders. In order to determine whether the present findings can be generalized to other adolescent populations, further research needs to be done. This kind of research should be conducted using a true experimental design with a longer-term more fully implemented Research for Better Schools Experience-Based Career Education Model.

One feature of this study is the testing of an instrument that quantifies the occupational sex-role stereotyping of adolescents. Other methods of measurement of stereotyping need to be developed using other theory-based lists of occupations.

The information provided by this study can be instrumental in the career couseling of male and female junior high school students, particularly as a vehicle through which sexual biases in the selection of high school curricula are explored. It is inferred from this study that the only way to keep sex-role stereotyping from limiting student options is to actively work on it in the classroom and in the community.

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